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Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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**Re: Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Bill 2013 and
Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013**

Having had the opportunity to read the many submissions on the committee website I am impressed with the thoughtful arguments presented, in particular, by CoCA, many of which I strongly support.

However I urge Senators, at this time, to disregard all arguments to cap celebrant numbers or pricing existing or potential marriage celebrants out of the market.

In its collective wisdom Parliament decided there should be no restriction to marriage celebrant numbers, subject of course to suitability conditions etc. Regardless of the pros and cons of that earlier decision any change to numbers is for another occasion and confuses the merits – and otherwise! – of the Bills currently before the committee.

I would hope that Senators (and the Attorney-General) will take note of the overall dissatisfaction with the current *Marriage Act* and *Regulations* and their administration, and will make further consideration of these issues a priority for further review.

Both marriage celebrants and MLCS have a conflict of interest in the reduction of celebrant numbers and any arguments from both parties require careful independent scrutiny and analysis, along with the longer term implications, in order to strike the correct balance.

Yours faithfully

Peter Hooper